

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
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INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
USLO PEKING  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 04826

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

PASS LABOR

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, JA  
SUBJECT: UNEVENTFUL SOCIALIST CONVENTION

REF: TOKYO 3418

SUMMARY: JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP) HELD UNUSUALLY QUIET ANNUAL CONVENTION MARCH 14-16. WITH LONGSTANDING HOSTILITY BETWEEN PARTY'S RIGHT AND LEFT WINGS IN ABEYANCE, DELEGATES SMOOTHLY APPROVED NEW CHAIRMAN ASUKATA'S PROPOSED ACTION PROGRAM, WHICH AIMS AT BROADENING PARTY AND INCREASING ITS MEMBERSHIP TO ONE MILLION. MEDIA HAVE HAILED ASUKATA'S SUCCESS BUT WE THINK IT MIGHT BE SHORT-LIVED. HE HAS, AFTER ALL, ONLY COVERED UP JSP'S CHRONIC FACTIONAL PROBLEM, AND AT SAME TIME HAS APPARENTLY GIVEN SOHYO UNIONS DISTURBING IMPRESSION THEY WILL PLAY LESSER ROLE IN PARTY DURING HIS ADMINISTRATION. END SUMMARY.  
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1. MAIN ITEM ON AGENDA FOR JSP'S 42ND ANNUAL CONVENTION MARCH 14-16 WAS ACTION PROGRAM SUBMITTED BY PARTY'S NEW CHAIRMAN ICHIO ASUKATA, UNTIL RECENTLY YOKOHAMA'S MARXIST MAYOR. AS REPORTED IN REFTEL, PROGRAM SHUNS IDEOLOGICAL THEMES AND CALLS FOR REBUILDING OF PARTY BASED ON ENLARGED, ONE-MILLION MEMBERSHIP AND DIALOGUE WITH PEOPLE.

BECAUSE ITS PRAGMATISM RUNS COUNTER TO HARD-CORE MARX-LENINIST IDEOLOGY OF PARTY'S LARGE SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION, MANY FEARED ALL TOO COMMON RIGHT VERSUS LEFT VITUPERATION WOULD BREAK OUT ON CONVENTION FLOOR. INSTEAD, SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, APPARENTLY UNDER ORDERS FROM THEIR LEADER, PROFESSOR ITSURO SAKISAKA, TO COOPERATE, WERE QUIET AND PROCEEDINGS WENT SMOOTHLY. (EMBOFF AT ONE POINT OVERHEARD SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION LEADER TAKAZAWA SAY CONVENTION WAS SO BORING HE WISHED HE HAD GONE GOLFING.)

2. CONVENTION'S OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS ALSO WENT SMOOTHLY. ASUKATA'S UNANIMOUS ELECTION TO CHAIRMANSHIP BY VOTE OF JSP'S 43,000 MEMBERS IN LATE FEBRUARY WAS OFFICIALLY CONFIRMED. DELEGATES AGREED TO STUDY MID-TERM ECONOMIC POLICY PAPER PREPARED BY TOKYO UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AND ASUKATA BRAIN-TRUSTER CHIKARA OUCHI FOR ADOPTION LATER IN YEAR. AFTER FAIRLY BRIEF DISCUSSIONS, DELEGATES UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED NUMBER OF RESOLUTIONS, INCLUDING CONDEMNATION OF "GROWING US-JAPAN-ROK MILITARY UNIFICATION," EXPRESSION OF DETERMINATION TO SUPPORT LABOR UNIONS IN THEIR ANNUAL "SPRING WAGE STRUGGLE," AND DEMANDS THAT FUKUDA GOVERNMENT ENACT ECONOMIC POLICIES AIMED AT HELPING WORKERS BESET BY CONTINUED UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION, NOT AT BIG BUSINESS. ALONG WITH RESOLUTION URGING GOJ TO CONCLUDE JAPAN-CHINA PFT WITHOUT DELAY, WHICH EVEN STRONGLY PRO-MOSCOW SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION DID NOT OPPOSE, CONVENTION ENDORSED CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S EARLIER DECISION TO CONFIDENTIAL

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SEND DELEGATION HEADED BY CHAIRMAN TO PEKING. ASUKATA'S GROUP DEPARTED MARCH 22 AND WILL RETURN MARCH 27.

3. COMMENT: IN WAKE OF DEFECTION OF HIDEO DEN AND TWO OTHER JSP DIETMEN IN SEPTEMBER 1977 IN PROTEST AGAINST ITS GROWING CONTROL OVER PARTY, SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION AGREED TO CEASE ALL OF ITS INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES AND CONDUCT ITSELF AS SIMPLE THEORY STUDY GROUP UNDER PARTY DISCIPLINE. DURING CONVENTION, TO SURPRISE OF MANY, IT DID SO. SEVERAL EDITORIALS HAILED ASUKATA'S QUIET AND SUCCESSFUL CONVENTION AS SIGNALING POSSIBLE END OF JSP'S LONG PERIOD OF INTERNAL STRIFE AND DISUNITY. THAT COULD PERHAPS TURN OUT TO BE TRUE, BUT MANY DOUBT IT. PARTY'S SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION PROBLEM MAY NOT HAVE BEEN VISIBLE AT CONVENTION BUT IT PERSISTS AS MUCH AS EVER. ASSOCIATION SEEMS TO BE LYING LOW TEMPORARILY UNTIL TIME IS RIPE TO REASSERT ITSELF.

4. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT ASUKATA'S NEW POLICIES MAY BE IN PROCESS OF CREATING ADDITIONAL PROBLEM WITH SOHYO UNIONS. ALTHOUGH ONCE CONNECTED WITH JAPAN TEACHERS UNION AND OLD FRIEND OF SOHYO CHAIRMAN MAKIEDA, ASUKATA IS NOT UNION MAN. DURING CONVENTION SOME SOHYO REPS TOLD EMBOFF THEY HAD DISTURBING IMPRESSION UNIONS

WOULD BE GIVEN LESSER ROLE IN ASUKATA'S MILLION-MEMBER PARTY AND EXPRESSED DOUBT ABOUT RELEVANCE OF MID-TERM ECONOMIC PLAN TO UNION NEEDS.

5. ASPECT WHICH REMAINS UNCLEAR IS EFFECT OF ASUKATA AND HIS NEW POLICIES ON JSP'S DECLINING PUBLIC IMAGE. GIVEN RELATIVE LACK OF PUBLIC AND MEDIA RESPONSE, HOWEVER, HE APPEARS TO HAVE MADE LITTLE IMPACT SO FAR. MANSFIELD

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014